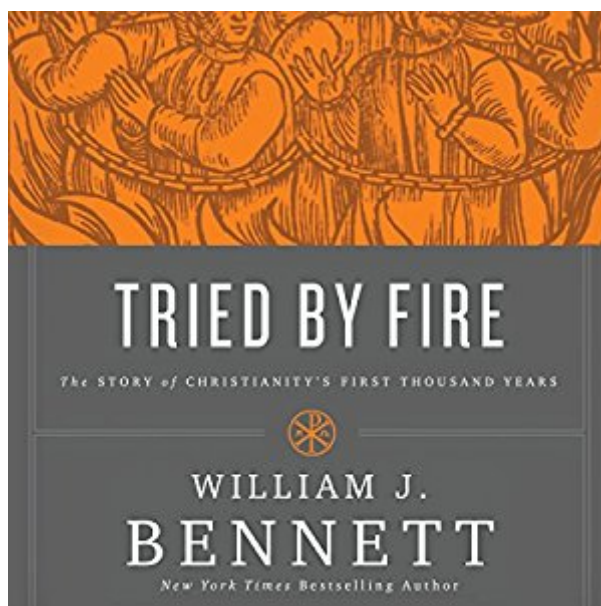


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# Tried By Fire: The Story Of Christianity's First Thousand Years



## Synopsis

Full of larger-than-life characters, stunning acts of bravery, and heart-rending sacrifice, *Tried by Fire* narrates the rise and expansion of Christianity from an obscure regional sect to the established faith of the world's greatest empire, with influence extending from India to Ireland, Scandinavia to Ethiopia, and all points in between. William J. Bennett explores the riveting lives of saints and sinners, paupers and kings, merchants and monks who together - and against all odds - changed the world forever. To tell their story, Bennett follows them through the controversies and trials of their time. Challenged by official persecution, heresy, and schism, they held steadfast to the truth of Christ. Strengthened by poets, preachers, and theologians, they advanced in devotion and love. In this moving and accessible narrative, *Tried by Fire* speaks across centuries to offer insight into the people and events that shaped the faith that continues to shape our lives today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

William J. Bennett's latest book, *Tried by Fire*, is a guided tour of the events and people of the first thousand years of the Church's life, and it tells history that needs to be told in a way history should be told. This fast-paced survey is certainly a must read for everyone who already has a commitment to Christianity, because the book shows how the Church developed and spread in the millennium after the Apostles died. But *Tried by Fire* is also for those who are not predisposed to this particular faith commitment, yet who genuinely want to have a better understanding of the people and events that are foundational to much that puts the West in Western Civilization. From the heroic perseverance of the Church's earliest martyrs in the face of brutal persecution,

through the wranglings to refine and preserve the sound doctrine inherited from Christ's Apostles, to the schism that shattered the unity of the Christian Church in the Early Middle Ages, Tried by Fire fills in much of the important background of Western Civilization that wasn't covered in our high school and college history survey classes. Tried by Fire also is a good read because Dr. Bennett writes history as history should be written: not as a dry historical chronicle, but with a human-interest approach that gives both color and texture to the story line. He introduces his readers of all faith commitments (or none at all) to a myriad of unfamiliar but must-know people, from Arius to Zosimus. In the pages of Tried by Fire, you'll meet people you'll love and others you'll love to hate along with some noble examples of people worthy of emulation today.

We read some authors to gain knowledge; however, there are others we seek to read because we know we will gain wisdom. William Bennett fits the latter class. No average writer. No average mind. No average experience. Maybe known for his roles as our nation's former Secretary of Education and Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Maybe known especially for his *The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories*, drawing on the wisdom of centuries passed down in the classics and by the sages of philosophy. It surprised me, but then didn't surprise me to see him write this book. It was meant for someone like Bennett to write. It was meant for someone who would tell history with the integrity it deserves. He tells it by referring to the giants: those who stand out in the world because of their lives, their teachings, and their willingness to suffer for both! If you were to go to Notre Dame looking for your Masters in Theology, or some other in Christianity, the works of these people would be required reading, simply because they are historical and history of Christianity cannot be told without them. These people meant what they said and died for what they said, beginning with the Early Church, those who followed them "who were taught by the Apostles" who took their places. Then, century by century, the men and women appear, who stood up against fierce persecution and brutal opposition. Here Bennett shows us that Christianity has never been for the faint of heart. It also has never been wholly accepted. It has never lived without some form of persecution. Make no mistake! This was the Catholic Church.

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